

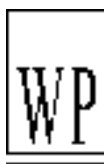
Backyard Bird watching

36 AUSTRALIAN BIRDS TO ENJOY

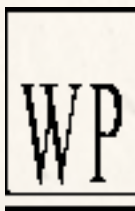
Share magic moments in nature



Ron Smith OAM and Bob Winters



Dedicated to the preservation of the environment of Australia's Backyards



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INTRODUCTION

Wherever you are outdoors, you will find birds. These are fascinating creatures whose ancient ancestors were feathered dinosaurs.

Birds will make their homes in our gardens and even in our busiest cities. The more natural the environment the more kinds of birds you will find.

There are many hundreds of birds in Australia, but only some live in our garden. This book will help you enjoy your garden birds and be captivated by their spellbinding behaviours.

Birds have many things in common. They are covered in feathers which help them fly and keep them warm. Did you know their body temperature is higher than ours? They have beaks and wings and walk on their toes. Their eggs have a hard shell and need to be kept warm.

Birds lay their eggs in nests. Most birds look after their hatchlings. They either feed their chicks or show them where to find food.



Wilbur Worm, environmental educator, is a constant bird watcher.

10 TIPS FOR BIRDWATCHING

#1: Look for movement

Our eyes are very good at seeing movement. Look in the tree, bushes and on the ground for movement. Don't forget to look at the sky for flying birds. It is harder to see moving birds on windy days. Even colourful parrots are hard to spot when they are still.

#2: Look in the direction of calling birds

Our ears are good at pinpointing the location of where a sound is coming from. Keep searching in the direction of the call until you find the bird.

#3: Look for birds at different times of the day

Some birds are most active at dawn and dusk. Other birds move between different gardens. On hot days, birds will often rest in the middle of the day. You will find more birds if you look for them at different times.

#4: Learn to use binoculars

Many birds will not allow you to get close to them. Binoculars are used to see the details of birds. Ask an adult to help you learn how to use binoculars.

#5: When watching birds, move slowly or not at all

Birds are very good at picking up movement. Compared to a bird you are very large. When you move towards birds, there will be a distance when they feel in danger and will fly away.

GALAH

Size: Large, 37cm long.

Where they hang out: Large flocks of Galahs live around farming country, in country towns, on golf courses and parks. Small groups or larger flocks might also visit your garden.

What they get up to: Galahs have short legs, so they waddle along the ground in search of seeds. When they climb around trees eating seeds, flowers or berries they can use their curved beak to hang onto branches. They can form exceptionally large noisy flocks. Early in the morning they might swoop high over the trees before deciding where to head for their daily feed. Many Galahs make a big racket, but unlike children, as soon as it's dark they are sound asleep and silent. When flying at dawn and dusk the pink and grey colours of Galahs are highlights in the landscape.

Conservation: Galahs need hollows in old trees to nest and often return to the same stand of trees each evening to sleep.





SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOO

Size: Large, 47cm long.

Where they hang out: These cockatoos gather at night to roost in the top of large gum trees. They feed in large flocks or spread out. Thousands may be seen feeding on farmland paddocks. Smaller numbers of groups call our cities home.

What they get up to: Sulphur-crested Cockatoos are known for their piercing screech as they fly and perch in trees. Most of their feeding is on the ground. As they waddle on their short legs, they find seeds, bulbs and insects to eat. In trees they also eat flowers and berries. Their strong beaks can crack nuts, shred bark and renovate tree hollows for nesting. Their bright yellow crest is used to communicate with other cockatoos.

Conservation: If you do not want to share your fruit trees with cockatoos, you may need to put a net over the tree. Large flocks of cockatoos can damage newly sown crops.

CRIMSON ROSELLA

Size: Large, 35cm long.

Where they hang out: Crimson Rosellas can be seen high up in the canopy of gum trees or down on the ground. They are most common in wet forests. They often visit native gardens and picnic areas. They need large tree hollows to nest in.

What they get up to: These Rosellas have many different calls to stay in communication with their friends. They mostly eat seeds and flowers. While feeding in trees, you might see bits of nuts and flowers raining down. Their hooked beak is an excellent nutcracker. Even though their colour is dazzling, they are very difficult to spot when they are motionless in a tree. They are often in small flocks. Young Crimson Rosellas are mostly green with only some blue and crimson.

Conservation: Only old, large trees will have big enough tree hollows for their nests. People can provide nesting boxes for them in their gardens.

